



Holiday Fruit Cake

Fruit cakes are often served in celebration of weddings and Christmas. A holiday staple for many New Englanders, this cake is made with a wonderful combination of chopped candied fruit, dried fruit, nuts, and spices, often soaked in spirits.

Ingredients:

1 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup dark brown sugar
3 large eggs
3 tablespoons brandy plus extra for brushing the cake
Juice and zest (outer orange skin) of one orange
Zest (outer yellow skin) of one lemon
3/4 cup ground almonds
1 cup hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans, or almonds, chopped
1 1/2 pounds of an assortment of dried fruits (dried apricots, figs, prunes, etc.), candied and chopped mixed peel, and glace cherries (chopped into bite size pieces)
3/4 pound of an assortment of raisins, sultanas, currants, dried cranberries and/or cherries
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees

1. Butter, or spray with a nonstick vegetable spray, an 8 inch (20 cm) spring form pan with a removable bottom. Line the bottom of the pan with buttered parchment paper. Also line the sides of the pan with a strip of buttered parchment paper that extends about 2 inches above the pan.
2. In the bowl of your electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, beat the butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.
3. Add the brandy, juice and zest of the orange, and zest of the lemon.
4. Fold in the ground almonds, chopped nuts, and all the dried and candied fruits.
5. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and baking powder and fold this into the cake batter.
6. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and, if desired, decorate the top of the cake with blanched almonds.
7. Place the spring form pan on a larger baking sheet.
8. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour. Reduce the oven temperature to 300 degrees and continue to bake the cake for another 1 hour 30 minutes or until a long skewer inserted into the center of the cake comes out with just a few moist crumbs.
9. Remove the cake from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool completely.
10. Brush the cake with a little brandy.